

Message Text

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70

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /057 W

----- 088871

R 181100Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2904

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 16907

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: UPCOMING ALL-INDIA CONGRESS PARTY SESSION

1. THE ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE PLENARY SESSION WHICH WILL MEET IN CHANDIGARH DEC 29-JAN 2 IS MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR 5,000 PERSONS TO ATTEND. CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY PURABI MUKARJEE TOLD THE PRESS DEC 17 THAT A DECISION HAD BEEN MADE THAT CURRENT CONGRESS PRESIDENT BAROOAH WOULD BE ELECTED FORMALLY TO HIS POSITION (HE HAS BEEN SERVING AS INTERIM PRESIDENT).

2. COMMENT: WE HAVE HEARD FROM SEVERAL USUALLY WELL-INFORMED SOURCES IN THE LAST WEEK THAT A DECISION ON ALLOWING BAROOAH TO REMAIN AS CONGRESS PRESIDENT HAD

BEEN MADE BY MRS GANDHI. WE ARE TOLD THIS IS NOT MEANT AS A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FOR BAROOAH BUT AS A FACE-SAVING MEASURE FOR BOTH BAROOAH AND MRS GANDHI SINCE FAILURE TO "RATIFY" HIS APPOINTMENT AS PRESIDENT WOULD IMPLY SHE HAD ERRED IN DESIGNATING HIM AS PRESIDENT, IT WOULD ALSO REFLECT ADVERSELY ON BAROOAH

HIMSELF (FOR WHOM MRS GANDHI CONTINUES TO HAVE PERSONAL REGARD). BAROOAH MAY, HOWEVER, THEN STEP
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DOWN AS CONGRESS PRESIDENT AFTER TWO OR THREE MONTHS

AND BE GIVEN A CABINET POST.

3. OUR POLITICAL SOURCES CONTINUE TO BE UNCERTAIN WHAT WILL BE DONE AT THE CHANDIGARH CONGRESS SESSION. ONE MP DESCRIBED IT AS LIKELY TO BE A "NON-EVENT" DESIGNED ONLY TO PLACE THE FORMAL PARTY STAMP ON MRS GANDHI'S ACTIONS SINCE JUNE. ANOTHER MP THOUGHT IT POSSIBLE THAT MRS GANDHI'S PLANS ON HOLDING OR DEFERRING ELECTIONS WOULD BE PLACED INFORMALLY BEFORE THE DELEGATES IN ORDER TO GET PARTY APPROVAL FOR WHATEVER SHE WISHES TO DO. THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THERE WILL BE MUCH PEP TALK ACCLAIM FOR THE PM AND EFFORTS TO AROUSE ENTHUSIASM AMONG PARTY WORKERS TO WORK ON THE 20 POINT PROGRAM. THE PLANNED SPECIAL CONCURRENT MEETING OF YOUTH CONGRESS CADRES MAY LEND ADDED VIGOR TO SUCH APPEALS. THERE MAY ALSO BE SOME REJIGGING OF PARTY GENERAL SECRETARIES, WITH AT LEAST ONE OR TWO OF THE CURRENT INCUMBENTS BEING REPLACED.

4. ALTHOUGH THE EMBASSY HAS USUALLY SENT A POLITICAL OFFICER OR POLITICAL LOCAL EMPLOYEE TO ATTEND SUCH CONGRESS SESSIONS, WE HAVE DECIDED THIS YEAR NOT TO DO SO.
SAXBE

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